



## **Town Of Milford**

### **OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN**

### **~ 2005 SELECTMEN'S REPORT ~**

The 2005 Board of Selectmen opened their year by welcoming back Noreen O'Connell for her second term on the Board, and welcoming Douglas Bianchi for his first term. The Board quickly established communication as a major goal for 2005. That goal included enhancing communication with Department Heads, the staff, the Budget Advisory Committee, and the public, as well as enhancing interdepartmental communication via technology.

We established a Vision Statement that included Milford municipal departments providing the services needed and approved by residents within a responsible and cost-effective budget, and a desire to control growth so as to preserve a community where families and businesses can grow and support each other, providing an economy and lifestyle of mutual prosperity. Based upon input from Department Heads, we drafted a Mission Statement to oversee the health, safety, welfare, and other services provided by the Milford municipal departments and ensure those services were administered efficiently, responsibly, and cost-effectively, with mutual courtesy and respect.

With the passage of the 2005 warrant article to elect Water Commissioners, the Board revised the charge to the Water and Sewer Study Committee to prepare for this transition. The Water and Sewer Study Committee submitted their final report, with recommendations, to the Board in September 2005. Likewise, with voter approval to keep the Milford Ambulance Service, the Ambulance Study Committee requested and was granted the opportunity to further study the efficiency of ambulance services. Renamed the Ambulance Efficiency Study Committee, the committee was charged with the task of evaluating ambulance services in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and make recommendations, if any. The Ambulance Efficiency Study Committee presented their final report to the Board of Selectmen in January 2006. Additionally, after a year of studying the potential of bringing PEG (Public, Educational, and Government) cable TV access channels to Milford cable subscribers, the PEG Access Advisory Committee has been altered to become the PEG Board, which will bring this initiative to fruition.

This past summer saw the dedication of the Gregg Crossing Bridge that now links Keyes Field and the Souhegan Valley Boys & Girls Club, the restoration of the bandstand on the Oval, and a number of teenage skateboarders came together to form a group called RIDERS (Residents Involved in Decisions Enhancing our Recreation Skate park). These teens, with adult supervision, took it upon themselves to raise money and fix the vandalism that had closed the skate park, so that it could be opened and used before the end of April 2005. RIDERS has since adopted responsible rules for those using the skate park, and members act as skate park monitors to curtail future vandalism. Last May we broke ground for the new Police Facility at the former sight of the Garden Street School. That facility should be completed in spring of 2006. Residents also had an opportunity to give the Planning Board their vision of Milford when the 2005 Community Vision Survey

was sent out as a precursor to creation of Milford's Growth Management Ordinance, which would be presented to the Selectmen in the fall.

As the year progressed the Police Chief informed the Board of Selectman of the rising drug crime in Milford, particularly connected to heroin. The Board would later show their support in combating this crime by having our law enforcement again actively involved with the State's Drug Task Force and by supporting Neighborhood Watch programs. We continued to monitor Nashua's attempt to take over Pennichuck Water Works by eminent domain. This was an issue that existed when this Board convened in March 2005 and we continue to watch the process from the perspective of what is best for Milford, but without commitment to one side or another. We see no resolution in the near future of the dispute that is currently taking place between Pennichuck and Nashua in the courts and at the Public Utilities Commission.

Summer presented the Board with some of the most controversial, and unique, issues of the year. The communications tower that we use now for emergency communication was essentially condemned in terms of safety. In addition, the way that it was originally erected has caused damage to Town Hall. US Cellular offered to donate a 20-foot higher tower, fix the building damage causing by the existing tower, anchoring the new tower in a way that structure damage would not take place, and pay for the new antennas, cables and other accessories, as well as pay the Town rent, if they could place three cell antennas on this new tower. This offer represented about a \$150,000 savings to taxpayers, who would otherwise have to pay the bill. Equally, if not more importantly, the additional height of the new antenna will give our emergency services communication to parts of town where they cannot currently communicate with each other. Concerns were raised among some that the historical aesthetics of the building would be diminished by the additional height of the antenna.

The Town was also informed this past summer that one part of its boundary line with Amherst was inaccurate and that some residents on Summer Street, in fact, lived in Amherst, while others had the real boundary line not only splitting their property between the two towns, but their homes as well. Through an amicable working relationship with Amherst Selectman, this unique issue has been turned over to our State legislators to seek legislative approval to officially change boundary lines to those lines observed by both towns prior to the discovery of the inaccuracy. For this change to be effective, it must be passed by the State legislature, and by the voters of Milford and Amherst. This issue is on the 2006 Town Warrant.

In August, the Board commenced holding "5th Monday Forums". These forums are held on the fifth Monday of those months that have a fifth Monday, and offer residents the opportunity to stop by the Selectmen's office and talk to the Board informally about ideas or concerns they may have. Forums held in August and October were well-attended and yielded good feedback and ideas for Board members. In 2006, 5th Mondays fall on January 30, May 29 (Memorial Day), July 31, and October 30.

In September, working on a mutually agreeable budget schedule that called for earlier decisions, joint meetings, and a close working relationship with the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), Selectmen and the BAC started working on the 2006 budget. To enhance public communication, the PEG TV Manager has videotaped the department budgets presentations, as well as joint Selectman/BAC discussions sessions on the budget, with the intent of broadcasting these meetings in January 2006, prior to the Town

Deliberative Session. The PEG Board had also set a goal of providing a live broadcast of the Town Deliberative Session in February.

We learned in September that the Federal Government had earmarked \$2.8 million for Milford to use on improvements to South Street and the Oval. A requirement of the Federal funding is that the Town will be responsible for only 20% of the total project cost, or \$700,000 over the five-year life of the project planning and construction. In order for the Town to move the project forward and receive the Phase 1 funding (\$400,000) during 2006, the Town will be required to appropriate \$80,000 (or 20% of the Phase 1 project cost). The project is currently scheduled for construction to start in 2011.

A Growth Management Plan was presented by the Planning Department to Selectmen at their October 10th meeting. The Selectmen accepted this document and presented it to the voters for approval at the March 2006 meeting

As we worked our way through the creation of the 2006 budget, we assessed staffing workload, resources and space needs. We reviewed the marketing of the area we commonly call the BROX property, reviewed the recently presented BROX Property Community Land Master Plan, and entertained and supported the implementation of a TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) District on the BROX property as a way of attracting industry to that area. In November, a BROX Community Property Development Committee was established and charged with creating a plan for the development potential of the BROX property, and investigating ways to fund the development.

With rising energy costs, the Board sought feedback from Town employees and citizens on ways the Town might be able to implement energy-saving ideas. The Board worked on revising and updating the Solid Waste Ordinance and Recycling Ordinance and the Transfer Station noted on its new Community Information sign that taxpayers had saved \$50,000 through recycling. The goal for 2006 has been set at \$60,000.

With the close of 2005, we can look at back and see many things that have been accomplished. We can also see many challenges ahead, and some from the past that we need to revisit. We continue to look optimistically at these challenges, making decisions to the best of our ability, according to the information we have before us. We will continue to do our best to serve you, to uphold the trust you placed in us when you elected us. We don't pretend to have all the answers, but go forward with commitment and confidence that together we can address the challenges as they arise, while preserving the character of this Town we choose to call home.

Respectfully.

The Milford Board of Selectmen

Gary Daniels, Chairman

Leonard Mannino, Vice Chairman

Noreen O'Connell

Lawrence Pickett

Douglas Bianchi